egy, a great work on agriculture by the most eminent Christian & the time, Hsu Kuang-ch'i, many treatises on law (which in fluenced Korea, Japan, and Annam), books on medicine, includ- ing a huge *materia medico,* (the *Pen ts'ao kang mu,* by Li Shih- chen, and based in part on earlier works of the same kind), many encyclopaedias, including the largest of its class, already men- tioned, critiques of art, and collections of Buddhist and Taoist works. All these required diligence, but in imaginative power few if any rose above mediocrity. There were, to be sure, poets, some of whom became famous—such as Li Tung- yang—but none achieved the place in Chinese literature that those of the Tang had won. Late in the Ming the beginning of a new scientific study of philology came into being. Moreover, in a work pub- lished in 1543, Mei Tzu questioned the "ancient text" of the *Shu Ching*—the portions of that venerable work which in the next dynasty were conclusively proved to be spurious. Ming thought/however, was largely confined to familiar channels. Eu- ropean missionaries brought in new ideas in mathematics, astron- omy, and theology, and wrote extensively on them, but down to the close of the Ming these did little to stir the Chinese niind from its accustomed grooves.

CULTURE UNDER THE MING! ART

In art, the Ming period is sometimes described as decadent. For some forms the generalization holds true, but it is by no means entirely accurate.

Buddhist sculptured figures, while produced in large quan- tities, for vigor and religious feeling did not begin to approach those of earlier dynasties. It is in secular subjects from everyday life, and in the carving of jade, ivory, columns, and balustrades,

that Ming sculpture is seen at its best.

In painting, too, it is questionable whether Ming artists attained the levels reached by their predecessors of the T'ang and the Sung. Hung Wu established at Nanking an Academy of Painting, probably in an attempt to emulate the Sung. For some years, indeed, the Sung traditions in style and subject matter were continued. The dynasty's roster of painters is a long one. The variety of subjects was fairly large—landscapes, birds, flowers, portraits of court ladies—and the elegance, delicacy, and